LITTLE V FOLK'S V BOOKS.

THE STORY

OF THE

BLUE BIRD.

TREACT ... WITH ILLUSTRATIONS.

LONDON.

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Little Folk's Books.

THE STORY

Che Blue Bird.



Edited by Madame de Chatelain.

The Blue Bird.

THERE once lived a king who was so afflicted at the loss of his wife, that his subjects feared he would die of grief, when a very artful, good-looking widow undertook to console him, and succeeded so well, that in a few months' time she was raised to the throne, and



the deceased queen was quite forgotten. The king had a daughter by his first marriage, whose name was

Florine, and who, in point of beauty and accomplishments, was justly looked upon as the eighth wonder of the world. The new queen had likewise a daughter, who had been brought up by her godmother the fairy Soussio, but was the very reverse of the princess as regards both personal and mental charms. She was called Troutilla, for she had as many freckles as a trout; moreover, her hair was black and greasy, and her yellow skin as oily as that of a fish. Still the queen fancied her a most attractive young lady, and told the king that she expected her to be provided with a husband before Florine, to which the weak monarch consented.

Just at this time it was rumoured that King Charmer was about to visit their court, so the queen ordered the most splendid dresses to be made for Troutilla, while she persuaded the king not to allow Florine to have any new clothes; and when the day came, she bribed the princess's women to steal all her jewels and gala dresses, so that she had nothing but a dirty gown to put on, which made her feel so ashamed that she hid herself in a corner of the room as the foreign king entered. The queen received King Charmer with all due honours, and introduced her daughter to him, but

he could scarcely bear to look at her, and inquired whether there was not another princess, named Florine. "Yes," said Troutilla, "there she is, but she is such a dirty slut that she is glad to hide herself." A deep blush overspread Florine's cheeks at these words, and made her look so lovely, that King Charmer was quite dazzled, and bowing respectfully to the beautiful princess, he said: "Your beauty, madam, is such as to require no aid from foreign ornament." And, from that moment, all his attentions were paid exclusively to Florine.

The queen and Troutilla were so enraged at the turn matters had taken, that they persuaded the king to order Florine to be shut up in a tower, as long as King Charmer should remain at court, and gave directions to all who were about his person to speak ill of the princess. But King Charmer did not believe a word they said, and bid a young prince, who followed him on his travels, try and bribe one of the princess's women to obtain an audience of the beautiful Florine. The chambermaid promised compliance, and told him Florine would be sure to be that evening at a window on the ground-floor, overlooking the garden; but instead of apprising her mistress, she went

and revealed King Charmer's intentions to the queen, who immediately determined to send Troutilla to the rendezvous. The night happened to be so dark that the king, wholly unaware of the trick played off upon him, said the most tender things imaginable to Troutilla, mistaking her for Florine, and, putting his ring on her finger, begged her to fix the day when he might take her away to his own kingdom. Accordingly, the next evening was appointed, when he came to fetch her in a flying chariot drawn by winged frogs; and scarcely had they set off, than he asked Troutilla where she chose their wedding to take place. She replied, that they had better repair to the palace of her godmother, the fairy Soussio, which they reached in a very short time. The palace was so brilliantly illuminated that the king would have perceived his error on their alighting, had not Troutilla been huddled up in a thick veil. She then ran to inform her godmother what she had done, but the walls of the room where she left the king being of transparent diamond, he perceived Troutilla and the fairy in earnest conversation, and wondered how she came there, when presently they entered the room where he was waiting, and Soussio told him it was now time he should marry the princess Troutilla, to whom he had given his ring as a token of his love. The king, perceiving he had been basely deceived, declared nothing should move him to marry such a monster of ugliness, and of so wayward a disposition. Finding threats and entreaties alike unavailing, Soussio at length said: "Well, then! Choose between doing penance for seven years, and marrying my god-daughter." "Anything you like," said the king, "so that I be delivered from this uncouth creature." "Then you may fly out of that window, if you please," said Soussio, " for you shall be a Blue Bird for seven years." These words were no sooner uttered than the king was transformed into a bird, and flew away with a dismal screech. The fairy then sent the disappointed Troutilla home.

Meanwhile the Blue Bird was fluttering about the palace, and peeping in at all the windows in the hopes of seeing his beloved princess. At length he happened to perch on a tall cypress just opposite Florine's tower, and hearing the sound of lamentations, and recognising the princess's voice, he flew on to the window sill, and quickly made himself known. Florine could scarcely recover from her surprise. The king then explained all that had taken place; and, if anything

The enchanter had only to mutter a few words to restore the poor bird completely, and then he inquired how he came to be transformed, and how this accident had happened? The Blue Bird related his sad story, and feeling convinced that Florine had connived at his intended destruction, in order to make her peace with the queen, he begged the enchanter to take him home with him, and keep him in a cage out of harm's way.

Meanwhile poor Florine kept calling to her bird in vain, and was half distracted at the thought that he had perhaps fallen a victim to some snare laid by the queen. But the day of retribution had now come for her unworthy stepmother. The old king died suddenly, and the people rose and rushed to the palace, demanding to have their rightful sovereign, Princess Florine, restored to them. The queen treated the matter so haughtily, that a violent sedition ensued; the palace was forcibly entered, her apartment was pillaged, and she herself was stoned by the infuriated mob. Troutilla managed to escape, and reached her godmother's palace.

Florine was now raised to the throne; but, being intent on finding the Blue Bird, she named a council

THE BLUE BIRD.

to govern in her absence, and taking a quantity of jewels with her, she set off alone upon her travels, in the disguise of a peasant. After wandering a long way, both by sea and by land, she stopped one day to rest herself by the side of a spring, and could not refrain from weeping at the hopelessness of her search, when an old woman who passed by, besought her to



tell her the cause of her tears. The queen having related her story, the old woman suddenly changed to

THE BLUE BIRD.

a young and beautiful fairy, and said: "Peerless queen, the bird you seek is a bird no longer. My sister fairy, Soussio, has restored him to his shape, and he is now in his kingdom. Take these two eggs, and should you stand in need of help, break one of them. Now, farewell, and speed on your journey." The fairy would not afflict Florine by telling her that Soussio had only granted a temporary respite to King Charmer at the enchanter's request, on condition that he should either make up his mind to marry Troutilla, or resume his plumage at the end of a few months, for which purpose she had brought her god-daughter to his palace. So poor Florine, on arriving in his capital, was shocked to hear that the king was going to be married in a day or two to Troutilla. The queen then besmeared her face with mould, so as not to be recognisable, and went to the palace to crave an audience of the king. "A likely story, indeed," cried the guards, "that he would look upon such a dirty slut as you!" Just at this moment, however, Troutilla came out in regal pomp to get into her carriage, when Florine held up a pair of emerald bracelets the king had formerly given her, and asked whether her highness would purchase them. "And what may

you ask for your glass baubles?" cried Troutilla. " Leave to sleep in the Chamber of Echoes," replied the queen, who had formerly been told by the Blue Bird that there existed in his palace a chamber so contrived, that everything said there in a low voice could be distinctly heard in his bed-room. Floring was therefore taken into this chamber, where she reproached the king for his inconstancy all night long. But it was only wasting her breath, for King Charmer, since his misfortunes, regularly took opium to lull him to sleep, and had therefore not heard a syllable. The queen, finding he took no notice of her remonstrances, and wanting to obtain the means of again spending the night in the same place, now broke one of the eggs, and out came a tiny steel coach drawn by six green mice, and containing four puppets, who played the most surprising antics. When Troutilla sallied forth to take an airing, the queen set the little carriage a running, which so delighted the princess that she cried out: "Ho, there! you dirty scullion, what will you take for your mice and toy coach?" "I only want to sleep in the Chamber of Echoes again," replied Florine. "So you shall, poor fool," rejoined Troutilla. But Florine met with no better

success than before, and next day she broke her remaining egg, which yielded a pie containing six birds, who were the best singers and fortune-tellers ever heard of. While she was waiting with her pie for Troutilla to make her appearance, one of the king's valets said to her: "It's well his majesty takes so much opium, or else he would be finely disturbed with your chattering in your sleep, as you do all night long." The queen took a handful of diamonds from her bag, and said: "I care so little about disturbing him, that if you will give him no opium to-night, you shall have these." The valet of course promised compliance; and, having sold her pie on the usual terms, the queen was allowed to spend the night in the Chamber of Echoes. This time the king heard all she said, and, recognising Florine's voice, he immediately went down by a back staircase into the cabinet, where he found the queen, who had thrown off her rags, beneath which she wore a dress of white taffeta. The lovers were so delighted to see each other, that they found little room for mutual reproaches about their supposed grievances, but all was quickly explained, when it turned out that Troutilla and her godmother were the only obstacles to their happines.

THE BLUE BIRD.

At this moment the enchanter appeared, together with the fairy who had given the queen the eggs, and declared that their united power would have sufficient strength to destroy Soussio's enchantment, and that nothing now prevented the marriage of King Charmer



and his beautiful Florine. The news flew speedily over the palace, and Troutilla came in a great rage to abuse her rival, when the enchanter and the fairy changed her to a sow, that she might grunt and grumble to the end of her days; and probably she proved as great a shrew in her sty as she had hitherto shewn hesself in a palace.

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LITTLE FOLK'S BOOKS.

THIRTY-SIX KINDS, ALL ILLUSTRATED.

JACK AND THE BEAN-STALK! THE BLUE BIRD. JACK THE GIANT KILLER. OLD MOTHER HUBBARD STR GUY OF WARWICK. LITTLE BO-PEEP, &C. TOM HICKATHRIPT. BOLD ROEFS SOOD. TOM THUMB. LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD, LITTLE MAIA. THE SLEEPING BEAUTY. FAIR ONE & GOLDEN LOCKS. THE ELFIN PLOUGH. REAUTY AND THE BEAST. OUGDERELLA. THE PRINCESS ROSETTA. FUSS IN BOOTS. THE WHITE CAT. THE UGLY LITTLE DUCK. THE CHARMED FAWN. THE ELEVEN WILD SWANS. THREE GOLDEN HAIRS. LITTLE GOODY TWO SHOES. THE JEW IN THE BUSH.

THE THREE BEARS. HOUSE THAT JACK BUILT. DEATH OF COCK ROBIN. THE FAIRY FOREST. THE NINE MOUNTAINS. JOHNNY AND LISBETH. THE LITTLE FISHER BOY. HANS IN LUCK. THE GIANT AND TAILOR. THE GOATHERD. THE NOSE TREE.

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